

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(currently amended)** A position-linked chat system, comprising for carrying out a chat using a plurality of terminals connected to a server ~~device~~ through a network, wherein said server ~~device~~ includes: [[,]]

a chat room control unit for generating ~~which generates~~ a plurality of chat rooms ~~divided~~ based on a geographical standard ~~related to the current position of each user~~;

a chat room selecting unit ~~which selects~~ for selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at [[a]] each terminal is to participate, based on information being transmitted from said terminal and relating to the current position of [[the]] said terminal posted from each terminal; and

a sound control unit for mixing ~~which mixes~~ voices of users transmitted via the terminals of the ~~respective~~ users who participate in the same chat room; ~~selected by said chat room selecting unit~~

wherein each terminal is configured to periodically transmit the information relating to the current position of said terminal to said server.

2. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat system according to claim 1, wherein said chat room control unit is configured to generate ~~generates~~ a plurality of ~~hierarchical~~ hierarchically arranged chat rooms ~~of which~~ wherein different chat rooms at the same hierarchical level have different geographical coverage and a chat room at a higher hierarchical level has geographical coverage overlaying that of chat rooms at a lower hierarchical level ~~division ranges are mutually different and mutually superimposed.~~

3. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat system according to claim 1, wherein said chat room control unit is configured to further divide the generated ~~generates a plurality of chat rooms by various categories selectable by that are divided based on a geographical standard, and that are further divided based on a standard of a purpose of each user.~~

4. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat system according to claim 1, wherein ~~when a chat room has been selected by said chat room selecting unit,~~ said chat room control unit is configured to combine or divide the chat rooms ~~generates, combines or divides the chat room~~ according to the number of users participating in the chat ~~[[room]]~~ rooms.

5. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat system according to claim 1, wherein said chat room selecting unit is configured to select ~~selects~~ a chat room corresponding to the current position of ~~[[each]]~~ said terminal ~~posted from each terminal, as a~~ as the chat room in which the user at said terminal is to participate.

6. **(currently amended)** A position-linked chat system, comprising a plurality of terminals connected to a server through a network, wherein said server includes:

a chat room control unit for generating a plurality of chat rooms based on a geographical standard;

a chat room selecting unit for selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at each terminal is to participate, based on information being transmitted from said terminal and relating to the current position of said terminal;

a sound control unit for mixing voices transmitted via the terminals of the users who participate in the same chat room; and

~~The position-linked chat system according to claim 1, wherein said server device further includes a move destination~~ a future position estimating unit for estimating ~~which estimates a future position of moving destination of a user at least one of said terminals~~ based on a change in

the current position of said at least one ~~[[each]]~~ terminal, ~~wherein posted from each terminal, and~~ said chat room selecting unit selects, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room corresponding to ~~[[a]] the future position of a move destination of a user~~ estimated by said ~~future move destination~~ position estimating unit, as ~~[[a]] the~~ chat room in which the user at said at least one terminal is to participate.

7. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat system according to claim 1, wherein said chat room selecting unit is configured to transfer a user from the chat room in which said user is currently participating to another ~~changes over a chat room in which a user is to participate,~~ according to a change in the current position of ~~[[each]]~~ the terminal of said user ~~posted from each terminal.~~

8. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat system according to claim 7, wherein when said chat room selecting unit is about to transfer the user to said another new ~~change over a chat room,~~ said sound control unit posts a warning to ~~[[a]] the~~ terminal of ~~[[a]] said~~ user ~~participating in the chat room to be changed over~~ that the chat room will be changed over is about to change.

9. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat system according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 24, wherein ~~said server device further includes an inter terminal distance calculating unit which calculates a distance between terminals based on the current position of each terminal posted from each terminal, and~~ said sound control unit controls the ~~the~~ ~~[[sound]]~~ volume of sound output from each terminal according to the distances ~~a distance between terminals~~ calculated by said inter-terminal distance calculating unit.

10. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat system according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 24, wherein ~~said server device further includes an inter terminal distance calculating unit which~~

~~calculates a distance between terminals based on the current position of each terminal posted from each terminal, and when the distances~~ a distance between terminals calculated by said inter-terminal distance calculating unit ~~[[is]]~~ are within a predetermined ~~distance~~ range, said sound control unit posts to the terminals within said range a message ~~each terminal of each user coming close to each other~~ that the users at said terminals are ~~coming~~ close to each other.

11. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat system according to claim 1, wherein said chat room selecting unit is configured to allow a user to simultaneously participate in multiple chat rooms, and said ~~when a plurality of chat rooms have been selected in which the terminal user is to participate, said~~ sound control unit mixes the voice of ~~[[this]]~~ said user transmitted via the ~~[[user]]~~ terminal of said user with voices transmitted via terminals of other users participating in ~~the plurality of~~ said multiple chat rooms.

12. **(currently amended)** A position-linked chat method of providing a chat service to users at ~~for carrying out a chat using~~ a plurality of interconnected terminals, said method comprising ~~connected to a server device through a network, wherein said server device performs~~ the steps of:

generating a plurality of chat rooms ~~divided~~ based on a geographical standard ~~related to the current position of each user;~~

iteratively obtaining the current position of each terminal based on information being transmitted from said terminal and relating to the current position of said terminal;

selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at [[a]] each terminal is to participate, based on information relating to the iteratively obtained current position of [[the]] said terminal; and posted from each terminal; and

mixing voices ~~of users~~ transmitted via the terminals of ~~respective~~ the users who participate in the same chat room ~~selected at the step of selecting a chat room.~~

13. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat method according to claim 12, wherein ~~[[at]]~~ in the chat room selecting step, a chat room corresponding to the current position of each terminal ~~posted from each terminal~~ is selected as ~~[[a]]~~ the chat room in which the user at said terminal is to participate.

14. **(currently amended)** A position-linked chat method of providing a chat service to users at a plurality of interconnected terminals, said method comprising the steps of:

generating a plurality of chat rooms based on a geographical standard;

selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at each terminal is to participate, based on information being posted from said terminal and relating to the current position of said terminal; and

mixing voices transmitted via the terminals of the users who participate in the same chat room;

~~The position linked chat method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of:~~

wherein said selecting step comprising estimating a future position of at least one of said terminals ~~a move destination of a user~~ based on a change in the current position of ~~each terminal posted from each~~ said at least one terminal, wherein ~~a~~ at the chat room selecting step, a chat room corresponding to ~~[[a]]~~ the estimated future position of a move destination of a user estimated at the move destination position estimating step is selected, among the generated chat rooms, as ~~[[a]]~~ the chat room in which the user at said at least one terminal is to participate.

15. **(currently amended)** The position-linked chat method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of transferring a user from the chat room in which said user is currently participating to another ~~wherein at the chat room selecting step~~, a chat room ~~in which a user is to participate is changed over~~ according to a change in the current position of ~~the each terminal posted from each terminal~~ of said user.

16. **(currently amended)** A computer-readable ~~recording~~ medium recorded with a program for providing a chat service to users at a plurality of interconnected terminals, said program including sequences of instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause said processor to perform ~~carrying out a chat using a plurality of terminals connected to a server device through a network, wherein said server device stores a computer program for performing the steps of:~~

generating a plurality of chat rooms ~~divided~~ based on a geographical standard ~~related to the current position of each user;~~

iteratively obtaining the current position of each terminal based on information being transmitted from said terminal and relating to the current position of said terminal;

selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at [[a]] each terminal is to participate, based on information relating to the iteratively obtained current position of [[the]] said terminal; and posted from each terminal; and

mixing voices of users transmitted via the terminals of respective the users who participate in the same chat room selected at the step of selecting a chat room.

17. **(currently amended)** The computer-readable ~~recording~~ medium ~~recorded with a program~~ according to claim 16, wherein ~~[[at]] in the chat room~~ selecting step, a chat room corresponding to the current position of each terminal ~~posted from each terminal~~ is selected as ~~[[a]] the chat room in which the user at said terminal~~ is to participate.

18. **(currently amended)** A computer-readable medium recorded with a program for providing a chat service to users at a plurality of interconnected terminals, said program including sequences of instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause said processor to perform the steps of:

generating a plurality of chat rooms based on a geographical standard;

selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at each terminal is

to participate, based on information being posted from said terminal and relating to the current position of said terminal; and

mixing voices transmitted via the terminals of the users who participate in the same chat room;

~~The computer-readable recording medium recorded with a program according to claim 16, further comprising the step of:~~

wherein said selecting step comprising estimating a future position of at least one of said terminals a move destination of a user based on a change in the current position of each terminal posted from each said at least one terminal, wherein a at the chat room selecting step, a chat room corresponding to [[a]] the estimated future position of a move destination of a user estimated at the move destination position estimating step is selected, among the generated chat rooms, as [[a]] the chat room in which the user at said at least one terminal is to participate.

19. **(currently amended)** ~~The computer-readable recording medium recorded with a program~~ according to claim 16, wherein said steps further comprise the step of transferring a user from the chat room in which said user is currently participating to another wherein at the chat room selecting step, a chat room in which a user is to participate is changed over according to a change in the current position of the each terminal posted from each terminal of said user.

20. **(currently amended)** A computer program product including computer instructions on a server for providing a chat service to users at carrying out a chat using a plurality of terminals connected to [[a]] said server device through a network, the computer instructions including instructions wherein said server device stores a computer program for performing the steps of:

generating a plurality of chat rooms divided based on a geographical standard related to the current position of each user;

iteratively obtaining the current position of each terminal based on information being transmitted from said terminal and relating to the current position of said terminal;

selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at [[a]] each terminal is to participate, based on information relating to the iteratively obtained current position of [[the]] said terminal; and posted from each terminal; and

mixing voices of users transmitted via the terminals of respective the users who participate in the same chat room selected at the step of selecting a chat room.

21. **(currently amended)** The computer program product according to claim 20, wherein [[at]] in the chat room selecting step, a chat room corresponding to the current position of each terminal posted from each terminal is selected as [[a]] the chat room in which the user at said terminal is to participate.

22. **(currently amended)** A computer program product including computer instructions on a server for providing a chat service to users at a plurality of terminals connected to said server through a network, the computer instructions including instructions for performing the steps of:

generating a plurality of chat rooms based on a geographical standard;

selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at each terminal is to participate, based on information being posted from said terminal and relating to the current position of said terminal; and

mixing voices transmitted via the terminals of the users who participate in the same chat room;

The program according to claim 20, further comprising the step of:

wherein said selecting step comprising estimating a future position of at least one of said terminals a move destination of a user based on a change in the current position of each terminal posted from each said at least one terminal, wherein a at the chat room selecting step, a chat room corresponding to [[a]] the estimated future position of a move destination of a user estimated at the move destination position estimating step is selected, among the generated chat rooms, as [[a]] the

chat room in which the user at said at least one terminal is to participate.

23. **(currently amended)** The computer program product according to claim 20, wherein said steps further comprise the step of transferring a user from the chat room in which said user is currently participating to another ~~wherein at the chat room selecting step, a chat room in which a user is to participate is changed over~~ according to a change in the current position of the ~~each terminal posted from each terminal of said user.~~

24. **(new)** A position-linked chat system, comprising a plurality of terminals connected to a server through a network, wherein said server includes:

a chat room control unit for generating a plurality of chat rooms based on a geographical standard;

a chat room selecting unit for selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at each terminal is to participate, based on information being transmitted from said terminal and relating to the current position of said terminal;

a sound control unit for mixing voices transmitted via the terminals of the users who participate in the same chat room; and

an inter-terminal distance calculating unit which calculates distances between the terminals based on the current position of each terminal.

25. **(new)** The system of claim 1, further comprising a user current position database for storing data related to multiple positions of each terminal obtained at predetermined time intervals.

26. **(new)** The system of claim 25, further comprising a future position predicting unit for predicting a future position of at least one of said terminals based on the stored multiple positions of said at least one terminal in the user current position database.

27. **(new)** The system of claim 26, wherein said future position predicting unit is configured to match the stored multiple positions of said at least one terminal with a predetermined pattern and to use said predetermined pattern to predicting the future position of said at least one terminal.

28. **(new)** The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of calculating distances between the terminals based on the current position of each terminal.

29. **(new)** The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of controlling the volume of sound output from each terminal according to the distances calculated in said calculating step.

30. **(new)** The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of informing, when the distances calculated in said calculating step are within a predetermined range, the users at the terminals within said range that they are close to each other.

31. **(new)** The method of claim 12, further comprising configuring the terminals to automatically, without user intervention, transmit the information relating to the current position of said terminal.

32. **(new)** The method of claim 12, wherein the current position of each terminal is repeatedly obtained and the chat room for the user at said terminal is repeatedly selected multiple times during a chat session of the user at said terminal.

33. **(new)** The method of claim 15, wherein said transferring is performed without terminating the chat session of the user being transferred.

34. **(new)** The method of claim 15, wherein said transferring is performed automatically unless the user to be transferred has chosen to stay in the current chat room.

35. **(new)** The method of claim 15, further comprising warning the user that the current chat room is about to change, wherein said transferring is performed automatically unless the user to be transferred has chosen to stay in the current chat room in response to said warning.

36. **(new)** A server for use in a position-linked chat system in which said server communicates with a plurality of terminals through a network, the server comprising:

a chat room control unit for generating a plurality of chat rooms based on a geographical standard;

a chat room selecting unit for selecting, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room in which a user at each terminal is to participate, based on information being transmitted from the terminal and relating to the current position of the terminal;

a sound control unit for mixing voices transmitted via the terminals of the users who participate in the same chat room; and

a future position estimating unit for estimating future position of at least one of the terminals based on a change in the current position of said at least one terminal, wherein

the chat room selecting unit further selects, among the generated chat rooms, a chat room corresponding to the future position estimated by the future position estimating unit, as the chat room in which the user at said at least one terminal is to participate.